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JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

DISPOSITION OF RECORDS OF COMBINED AND JOINT OPERATIONS

References: a. C.C.S. 701 Series  
b. J.C.S. 950 Series

Report by the Joint Logistics Committee

THE PROBLEM

1. To determine, among the combined and joint military records now in, or which may come into, the custody of the United States, the groups of records which do not properly belong in the archives of either the War or Navy Department, and to recommend to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, on the basis of major interest, the Department which should be designated custodian thereof.

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM AND DISCUSSION

2. See Appendix "B".

RECOMMENDATION

3. That the policies set forth in Appendix "A" be approved.

Information obtained from Erman Aug. 4, 1947:

JCS 950/15. Approved Aug. 28, 1946. War Dept. 6702  
Joint Logistics. Executive Sec. of Joint Chiefs of  
Staff is Capt. Stephens, USN

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At the request of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (J.C.S. 950/13), the Secretaries of War and the Navy, in a memorandum dated 27 June 1946 (J.C.S. 950/14), concurred in a plan proposed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the disposition of joint records. As a result, the following policies have been adopted:

a. All groups of records\* which were accumulated in a headquarters under Army command are considered to be Army records and will be filed in the archives of the War Department.

b. All groups of records which were accumulated in a headquarters under naval command are considered to be naval records and will be filed in the archives of the Navy Department.

c. Those combined records of Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force; Allied Force Headquarters; and Southeast Asia Command which are in the custody of the United States will be filed in the archives of the War Department.

d. The records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their subordinate committees will be retained indefinitely by the Joint Chiefs of Staff for current use.

e. Captured German records presently held by either the War or Navy Department will be retained in the files of the Department now having custody of them, and any additional captured German records which may come into the custody of the United States will be filed in the archives of the Department which has a major interest in the records involved.

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\* Groups of records consist of papers and documents accumulated and filed by a particular headquarters in connection with the accomplishment of its mission.

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f. Captured Japanese records will be filed in the archives of the Department having a major interest in the records involved. However, these records will not be filed in the archives until after they have been exploited for intelligence purposes.

g. The combined and joint records which are filed in the archives of either Department will be held with the understanding that the other Department will have complete access to them.

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APPENDIX "B"

FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM AND DISCUSSION

1. The problem consists of the following elements:

a. To determine, among the records which are in, or which may come into, the custody of the United States, the groups of records which are of combined or joint nature, and among them those which properly belong in the archives of the War or the Navy Department and those which clearly do not belong to either Department.

b. To recommend, on the basis of major interest, the Department which should be designated custodian of those records which properly do not belong to either Department.

2. For the purposes of this problem, the following definitions have been assumed:

a. Groups of Records. Groups of records consist of papers and documents accumulated and filed by a particular headquarters in connection with the accomplishment of its mission.

b. Joint Records. Joint records are those which are of interest and use to both the War and Navy Departments, generally because the material contained therein relates to the operations of both Services.

c. Combined Records. Combined records are those which come into the custody of the United States under the authority of C.C.S. 701 series, and are of interest and use to both the War and Navy Departments.

3. The principle is well established that the administrative integrity of a body of records accumulated under one authority should be maintained. No attempt should be made to segregate, paper by paper, joint records accumulated and filed by a field command conducting joint operations. To do so would

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not only prove impracticable because of the bulk of the material involved, but would diminish the research value of the material by removing it from its context. The rule has been concurred in by the Secretaries of War and the Navy that records affecting joint or combined operations would be held by either Department with the understanding that the other Department would have complete access to them. (J.C.S. 950/13 and 950/14).

4. After review of the operational and administrative headquarters of United States forces, it is considered that, with the exception of the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves and their subordinate committees, all such headquarters were either predominantly Army or Navy in command and staff and, consequently, employed the corresponding administrative and filing system.

5. In order to simplify the problem of allocating joint records of field commands, the following rules of action have been adopted.

a. All groups of records which were accumulated in a headquarters under Army command are considered to be Army records and properly belong to the archives of the War Department.

b. All groups of records which were accumulated in a headquarters under naval command are considered to be naval records and properly belong to the archives of the Navy Department.

6. In considering the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff themselves, the rules in paragraph 5 above do not apply. It is considered that as long as the Joint Chiefs of Staff remain in operation there is no necessity for a recommendation as to the disposition of their records.

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7. The records of committees or subcommittees designated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be considered separately. Since these records apply to and supplement the records of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and since departmental interest is considered to be equal in most cases, it is believed that when such a committee is disbanded, its records should revert to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the parent organization.

8. Certain groups of records were determined by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to be combined records and subject to special disposition by them. These records were microfilmed and copies furnished to both the British and United States Governments, and the original paper records were divided by agreement. The groups of records of this class which are now in the custody of the United States are as follows:

a. Records of Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force.

b. Records of Allied Force Headquarters.

c. Records of Southeast Asia Command.

Some of the record material of the groups cited above concern naval affairs, but the majority are mainly concerned with ground operations. It is, therefore, clear that the major interest in this group of records of combined headquarters lies with the War Department.

9. Records of joint committees or subcommittees designated by interdepartmental action and not functioning as subordinate agencies of the Joint Chiefs of Staff are not subject to determination of custody by them. The disposition of the records of such committees is a matter of concern to the record agencies of both Departments and must be arranged directly by the Departments concerned.

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10. Certain groups of captured records are now in the custody of the War and Navy Departments:

a. Captured German records. This collection has been accumulated by each Department because of interest in the particular records involved. In some cases, these records are held on a combined basis with British agencies by reason of agreements arrived at directly between the British and the United States agencies concerned. Since these groups of captured records were accumulated on the basis of major interest, they should remain with the Department in whose archives they are now filed, and any additional records which may come into the custody of the United States should be allocated to the files of either the War or Navy Department in the same manner.

b. Captured Japanese records. These records are at the present time arriving in the Washington Documents Center, and exploitation for intelligence purposes is not completed and will not be completed until after 1 July 1947. After exploitation, these groups of captured Japanese records should be allocated to the files of either the War or Navy Department on the basis of major interest.